



USAID
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KYRGYZ REPUBLIC

CASE STUDY

Taking the Burden off the Shoulders

A local organization creates jobs for people with disabilities in the capital of Kyrgyzstan



Mirbek Asangariyev, head of *Movement of Young Invalids*, with his employees.
Photo: EFCA

“Before, I used to ask my mom or relatives for money. I’m happy that now I have a chance to earn money for my own needs.”

- Rahat Kylychbekova, one of the people with disabilities that were trained and employed through the USAID-funded initiative.

Challenge

There are more than 110,000 people with disabilities in Kyrgyzstan. Over 90,000 of them live in poverty due to unemployment and extremely low social security payments that don’t exceed \$8 a month. Over the past 17 years, not one workplace for people with disabilities was created by government. In a market economy people with disabilities have become professionally obsolete, and their poor socio-economic status doesn’t allow them to start their own businesses.

Initiative

To develop income-generating activities among socially vulnerable groups, USAID, the Royal Netherlands Embassy, and Eurasia Foundation for Central Asia provided a grant to organization *Movement of Young Invalids* in Bishkek. This organization trained 18 people with disabilities in marketable crafts - dress-making for

the women and furniture-making for men - and opened a workshop to employ these individuals. *Movement then lobbied* the state and local businesses for orders, arguing that support for a business run by people with disabilities can benefit all parties. Through these efforts, the government instructed that state procurement tenders give priority for companies that employ people with disabilities. “By helping people with disabilities to work, the state eases the social burden from its shoulders and acquires additional labor,” says Mirbek Asangariyev, head of *Movement of Young Invalids*.

Results

The new company soon won tenders to make 170 sets of bed sheets and 50 bedside-tables for state-owned organizations and is working towards becoming self-sustainable, so that it can create more workplaces for persons with disabilities.

Twenty-nine year old Rahat Kylychbekova is one of the nine women with disabilities trained and employed by *Movement*. “I’m happy that now I have a chance to earn money for my own needs,” she says. “Before, I used to ask my mom or relatives for money. I’m really grateful to everyone who contributed in creating such a good conditions of employment for me and my new friends here.”